1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

301 beads thus formed are in great demand among the Indians, and used as pendants to their ears and hair, and are sometimes worn 'round the neck." (id 233.)

224 **Killing Buffalo On Ice.** "Friday, 29th. The weather clear, and the wind from the northwest. The obstruction above gave way this morning, and the ice came down in great quantities; the river having fallen eleven inches in the course of the last twenty-four hours. We have had few Indians at the fort for the last three or four days, as they are now busy in catching the floating buffalo. Every spring as the river is breaking up, the surrounding plains are set on fire, and the buffalo tempted to cross the river in search of the fresh grass which immediately succeeds to the burning; on their way they are often isolated on a large cake or mass of ice, which floats down the river. The Indians now select the most favorable points for attack; and, as the buffalo approaches, dart with astonishing agility across the trembling ice, sometimes pressing lightly a cake of not more than two feet square; the animal is of course unsteady, and his footsteps insecure on this new element, so that he can make but little resistance, and the hunter, who has given him his death wound, paddles his icy boat to the shore, and secures his prey." (id 239.)

532 **Indian Painting.** "Thursday, 4th. The day is clear and pleasant, though the wind is high from northwest. We now packed in different boxes a variety of articles for the president, which we shall send in the barge. A number of articles of Indian dress, among which was a buffalo robe, representing a battle fought about eight years since between the Sioux and Ricaras against the Mandans and Minnetarees, in which the combatants are represented on horseback. It has of late years excited much discussion to ascertain the period when the art of painting was first discovered, how hopeless all researches of this kind are, is evident from the foregoing fact. It is indebted for its origin to one of the strongest passions of the human heart; a wish to preserve the features of a departed friend, or the memory of some glorious exploit; this inherits equally the bosoms of all men, either civilized or savage. Such sketches, rude and imperfect as they are, delineate the predominant character of the savage nations. If they are peaceable and inoffensive, the drawings usually consist of local scenery and their favorite diversions. If the band are rude

1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

and ferocious, we observe tomahawks, scalping-knives, bows, arrows, and all the engines of destruction. A Mandan bow and quiver of arrows; also some Ricara tobacco seed, and an ear of Mandan corn. To these are added a box of plants, another of insects, and three cases, containing a burrowing squirrel, a prairie hen, and four magpies, all alive." (id 240)

Aricaras Arrive—Expedition Leaves Ft. Mandan. "Saturday, 6th. Another fine day with a gentle breeze from the south. The Mandans continue to come to the fort, and in the course of the day inform us of the arrival of a party of Ricaras on the other side of the river. We send our interpreter to inquire into the reason for coming, and in the morning, Sunday 7th, he returned with a Ricara chief and three of his nation. The chief, whose name is Kagohweto, or Brave Raven, brought a letter from Mr. Tabeau, mentioning the wish of the grand chiefs of the Ricaras to visit the president, and requesting permission for himself and four men to join our boat when it descends, to which we consented, as it will then be manned with fifteen hands, and be able to defend itself against the Sioux. After presenting the letter, he told us that he was sent with ten warriors, by his nation, to arrange their settling near the Mandans and Minnetarees, whom they wished to join; that he considered all the neighboring nations friendly, except the Sioux, whose persecutions they could no longer withstand, and whom they hoped to repel by uniting with the tribes in his quarter. He added, that the Ricaras intended to follow our advice and live in peace with all nations, and requested that we would speak in their favor to the Assiniboine Indians. This we willingly promised to do, and assured them that their great father would protect them, and no longer suffer the Sioux to have good guns, or to injure his dutiful children. We then gave him a small medal, a certificate of his good conduct, and carrot of tobacco, and some wampum, with which he departed for the Mandan village, well satisfied with his reception. Having made all our arrangements, we left the fort about five o'clock in the afternoon." (id 243)

"Sunday, April 7th. One of the Mandans likewise embarked with us, in order to go to the Snake Indians, and obtain a peace with them for his countrymen." (id 243)

The Lewis and Clarke expedition, having gone on over the

3: Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

Verendrye mentions their skill in making such things as painted ox-robes, deer skin, dressed buckskin, and ornamented fur and feathers, painted feathers, peltry, wrought garters, circlets for the head, and girdles. They certainly understood the art of dressing skins, though perhaps other nations equalled them. All their visitors speak of the ornamented robes for the decoration of which porcupine quills dyed various colors, or the pigments themselves, as paints, were used at first, though beads came gradually to take their places. The ornamentation consisted usually of representations of animals, and pictographic records. When leather got wet, it was beaten and rubbed with white clay which they always carried with them. This kept the robes soft. Then there were medicine bags, tobacco pouches, sheathes for knives and bows, all of skin, painted or embroidered with quills, such as are seen over the whole plains area. They had leather bridles for their horses, sometimes embroidered, and used a saddle, similar to that of the Dakotas. The horses were caught by means of long raw hide lariats which the Indians made themselves.

Whistles were also necessary articles to those belonging to the societies. Maximilian[1] describes them as "long wooden whistles at whose lower end an eagle feather on a string dangles." He says they also had large flute whistles, twenty inches long, with holes to vary the notes by application of the fingers. Besides these were the war whistles, usually made from the wing bone of some large bird. Other articles of bone, necessitated by the great use of skins, were the bone scrapers, needles and awls with which each house was profusely supplied.

Almost the only agricultural implements which they used were hoes. These were the shoulder blades of buffalo or occasionally of elk, which were cut down and to which a crooked stick was fastened as a handle.[2]

Among their cooking utensils, which were used in every hut, were spoons and ladles of bighorn and buffalo horns. Verendrye says some of these ladles held as much as three pints.

So far as the accounts go the Mandans did not make any textile fabric, though the Arikara are known to have made

[1] Op. cit., p. 316.

[2] Henry: vol. I, p. 342.

garters and belts of buffalo hair.

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NO17

Such a
301 necklace is seldom to be had for less than twelve dollars; and very often the owners of them will
[435] not part with them on any terms. The Mandans adorn themselves with many other kinds of necklaces, such as strings of glass beads, scented roots, or fungi, elks' teeth, for 100 or 150 of
29 which they will, in exchange, give a horse, or something equivalent. These Indians generally
302 wear no covering on the upper part of the body; the leather shirt of the Assiniboins, Sioux,
301 Crows, Blackfeet, and other nations that live more to the north and north-west, are seldom used among them; yet a few individuals have obtained them from those Indians, either as presents, or by barter. Even in the midst of winter, the Mandans wear nothing on the upper part of the body, under their buffalo robe. They paint their bodies of a reddish-brown colour, on some occasions with white clay; and frequently draw red or black figures on their arms. The face is, for the most part, painted all over with vermilion, or yellow, in which latter case the circumference of the eyes and the chin are red. There are, however, no set rules for painting, and it depends on the taste of the Indian dandy; yet, still, a general similarity is observed. The bands, in their dances, and also after battles, and when they have performed some exploit, follow the established rule. In ordinary festivals, and dances, and whenever they wish to look particularly fine, the young men paint themselves in every variety of way, and each endeavours to find out some new mode. Should he find another dandy painted just like himself, he immediately retires
[354] and makes a change in the pattern, which may happen three or four times during the festival. If they have performed an exploit, the entire face is painted jet black. Sometimes, though seldom, the Mandans adorn the wrist and upper arm with polished steel bracelets, which they obtain from the merchants; often they wear many brass rings on their fingers, and are, on the whole, excessively fond of ornaments and finery. The chief article of their dress is the ample buffalo robe, called mahita, or mih-aha, which is often very elaborate and valuable. In dry weather these buffalo robes are worn with the hair inwards, and in rainy weather with the hairy side outwards. They are tanned on the fleshy side, and painted either white or reddish-brown, and ornamented with a transverse band of blue or white glass beads, and three large rosettes of the same beads, often of very tasteful patterns, at regular intervals. The centre is frequently red, surrounded with sky blue, embroidered with white figures, or sometimes the reverse. The transverse band is worked with variously dyed porcupine quills, and is then narrower. This, however, is now old-fashioned, and was worn before the coloured glass beads were obtained in such numbers
532 from the Whites. Other robes are painted with a reddish-brown ground, and black figures, especially of animals; others have a white ground, with representations of their heroic deeds in black, or in gay colours, with the wounds they received, the loss of blood, the killed, the prisoners, the arms they have taken, the horses stolen (the number of which is indicated by the number of horse-shoes), in black, red, green, or yellow figures, executed in their yet rude style of painting. The

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

nations on the Missouri are all in the habit of painting such robes; but the Pawnees, Mandans, Manitaries, and Crows, are the most skilful in this art.* Another mode of painting their robes is, to represent the number of valuable presents they have made. By these presents, which are often of great value, they acquire reputation and respect among their countrymen. On such robes we observed long red figures, with a black circle at the termination, placed close to each other in transverse rows; they represent whips, indicating the number of horses given, because the whip belonging to the horse is always bestowed with the animal. Red or dark blue transverse figures indicate cloth or blankets given; parallel transverse stripes represent fire-arms, the outlines of which are pretty correctly drawn. The robe is frequently cut, at the bottom, into narrow strips, like fringe, and ornamented on the sides with tufts of human hair, and horse-hair dyed yellow and green, and with glass beads. Formerly the Indians painted these robes more carefully than they now do, and it was possible to obtain one for five musket balls and some powder; now they are far inferior, and eight or ten dollars is not unfrequently paid for them. A robe handsomely painted is equal in value to two not painted.

Their leggins are fastened with straps to their leathern girdles, and are embroidered at the outer seam with stripes, one or two inches in breadth, of porcupine quills, of beautiful various colours, and often with blue and white beads, and long leathern fringes, which form at the ankle a thick bunch, which trails upon the ground. The leather of which their leggins are made is, for the most part, stained of a reddish-brown, or pale red, usually with clay, sometimes white, and often marked below the knee with black transverse stripes. They, as well as all the tribes of North America, use what the English call a breech-cloth (Nokka), which is a narrow strip of woollen cloth, striped black and white, which passes between the thighs under the girdle, before and behind, where it hangs down. Their shoes, which are made of buck skin, or buffalo leather, are generally plain, or very slightly ornamented; but, in full dress, they are embroidered with coloured rosettes, or strips of dyed porcupine quills or beads. Those men who have performed exploits wear, round the ankles, wolf's tail, or pieces of otter skin, which are lined with red cloth, and trail on the ground. In the summer, when the men are at home, and go about in state, they carry the fan of eagle's feathers in their hands, which we have before described. What the Anglo-Americans call "the crow," which is worn by the warriors of the nations of the Mississippi, and the Lower Missouri, is wholly unknown among the tribes of the Upper Missouri, the Sioux, Assiniboins, Crows, Mandans, Arikkaras, Manitaries, and Blackfeet.

The boys are generally naked, and in winter merely have a robe thrown over them; the girls are dressed in leather in summer as well as winter. The women wear a long leather

* There is a print of such a robe in Major Long's Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, and another in Plate XXI., Fig. 1., of my Atlas. The original was painted by Mato-Topé himself, and the figures on it represent some of his principal exploits, in which he killed, with his own hand, five chiefs of different nations.

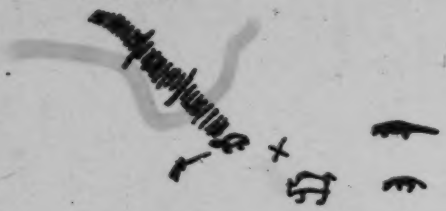
6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

mother-in-law never speaks to her son-in-law; but if he comes home, and brings her the scalp of a slain enemy, and his gun, she is at liberty, from that moment, to converse with him. This custom is found among the Manitaries, who have, doubtless, borrowed it from the Mandans, but not among the Crows and Arikkaras. Among the Chippeways, and the Algonquins in general, the name must not be changed; and persons with the same name must not marry, but consider each other as brothers and sisters. Among all the North American Indian nations there are men dressed and treated like women, called, by the Canadians, Bardaches, of whom Mc Kenzie, Tanner, Langsdorff, and others, have spoken; but there was only one such among the Mandans, and two or three among the Manitaries.

Volney, and some other writers, have spoken rather too unfavourably of the moral character of the aborigines of North America, and their domestic habits. According to them, distrust and hostile feeling prevail among them, for which reason they never leave their huts unarmed; but I can bear witness that they are frequently seen in their villages, as well as in the environs, without arms, and that it is only at greater distances, and when they appear in state, that they carry their weapons in their hands. I have never observed any disputes among them, but, on the contrary, much more unity and tranquillity than in civilized Europe. It has often been asserted that the Indians are inferior in intellectual capacity to the Whites; but this has been now sufficiently refuted; and Harlan is not wrong in saying that, among the races of men, of which Blumenbach reckons five, the American should be ranked immediately after the Caucasian. If man, in all his varieties, has not received from the Creator equally perfect faculties, I am, at least, convinced that, in this respect, the Americans are not inferior to the Whites. Many of the Mandans manifest a great thirst for knowledge, and much desire to hear something of objects of a higher order; and if they were not so much attached to the prejudices inherited from their ancestors, many of them might be very easily instructed. The bad examples which they so often observe in the white men, who roam about their country in quest of gain, are not calculated to inspire them with much respect for our race, or to improve their morality. And if they have not been found inclined to the Christian religion, this is, certainly, in some measure, the consequence of the bad conduct of the Whites, who call themselves Christians, and are often worse, and more immoral, than the most uncivilized of the Indians. Many American and foreign works have taken notice of the striking good sense and wit, the correct judgment of the Indians, in all the occurrences of daily life, and it would be mere repetition here to quote examples. One is often at a loss to answer their questions, founded on correct and natural judgment. The inactive mode of life natural to the Indians, which disdains all laborious exertion, is a great obstacle to their adopting a different system. But they are not deficient in talent for drawing, music, &c., and this is quite manifest at first sight. Several Mandans not only took much pleasure in drawing, but had a decided talent for it. The hieroglyphics are well known, which the Indians employ

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

532 212 instead of writing; for instance, the figures on their robes, the drawing of Mato-Topé (Plate XXII.), and the subjoined Indian letter from a Mandan to a fur trader:



212 437 The following is the explanation of the hieroglyphic figures contained in it:

The cross signifies, "I will barter, or trade." Three animals are drawn on the right hand of the cross: one is a buffalo; the two others, a weasel (*Mustela Canadensis*), and an otter. The writer offers, in exchange for the skins of these animals (probably meaning that of a white buffalo), the articles which he has drawn on the left side of the cross.

He has, in the first place, depicted a beaver very plainly, behind which there is a gun; to the left of the beaver are thirty strokes, each ten separated by a longer line; this means, I will give thirty beaver skins and a gun for the skins of the three animals on the right hand of the cross.

821 Many of them dispute, with great earnestness, on more elevated subjects; thus, they inquired our ideas of the various heavenly bodies, and of the origin of the universe, as they, themselves, declare their own silly traditions to be insufficient. Some, indeed, thought our ideas on these subjects much more silly than their own. They laughed outright, when we affirmed that the earth was round, and revolved about the sun. Others, however, would not reject our views, and were of opinion that, as the Whites could do so much which was incomprehensible to them, it was possible they might be right on this point also.

537 In all works that treat of these remarkable people, we find recorded very energetic and well-digested speeches of their chiefs. They frequently use very appropriate figures, and often said bitter truths to their white oppressors. Dr. Morse quotes some such phrases, used at the conclusion of treaties of peace, or declarations of war, which express much in a few words. Thus, in declarations of war: "The blood of our wives and children smokes on the ground! The bones of our warriors and old men are uncovered, and whiten the earth! The tomahawk is raised!" And on the conclusion of peace: "The bones of our warriors are buried! the tomahawk is buried! the blood of our women and children is covered! The path which leads to them must be kept clean; no weeds may grow there. The chain which binds us together must not become rusty." Or, on the contrary: "The chain begins to rust," &c. &c..